From linear to circular

A call to redesign the office of tomorrow



Interreg
North Sea

Co-funded by
the European Union

CEO

CIRCULAR
ECONOMY
OFFICE

Office furniture sector

Challenges

- **Linear dominance:** “Take-Make-Dispose,” with little reuse
- **High volume of waste:** More than 10 million tons are landfilled or incinerated annually in Europe
- **Lack of “design for disassembly”:** Difficult to disassemble, complex mix of materials
- **Infrastructure shortcomings:** Lack of collection and treatment systems, high repair costs
- **A dynamic workplace vs. static furniture:** Unsuitable for flexible work models
- **Knowledge gaps:** Limited expertise in circular economy solutions
- **Lack of incentives:** Regulations and financing instruments often favor new production



CIRCULAR ECONOMY OFFICE

Circular Economy Office

Project

- Förderprogramm: Interreg Nordsee 2021 - 2027
- Laufzeit: 06/2023 - 05/2026
- Budget: 4.3 Mio € (60% Förderquote)
- Partner: 13 Partner (6 Länder, 7 Pilote)



CIRCULAR ECONOMY OFFICE

Circular Office Furniture Definition

FURNITURE IS DESIGNED TO BE EASILY REPAIRABLE
OR TO ALLOW PARTS TO BE REPLACED.
SUSTAINABLE RAW MATERIALS ARE CAREFULLY SELECTED.

1. Product Design



2. Production

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY
RESOURCE-EFFICIENT PRODUCTION
ESTABLISHMENT OF UPCYCLING CENTERS



3. Distribution

EFFICIENT LOGISTICS
TAKE-BACK PLANNING
FURNITURE AS A SERVICE



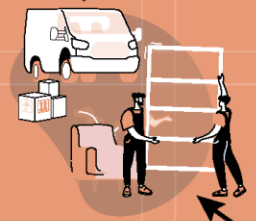
4. Use & Maintenance

EXTENDING PRODUCT LIFESPAN
MODULAR FURNITURE
INTERNAL REUSE



5.2 Reverse Logistics & Collection

ORGANIZED TAKE-BACK
CATEGORIZATION FOR REUSE
REFURBISHMENT AND RECYCLING



6. Disposal

LAST RESORT:
MATERIAL RECOVERY
FOR NEW PRODUCTS



Design

Where the circle begins

Design determines everything: material flows, lifespan, and future reuse

It sets the foundation *before* production, procurement, and use

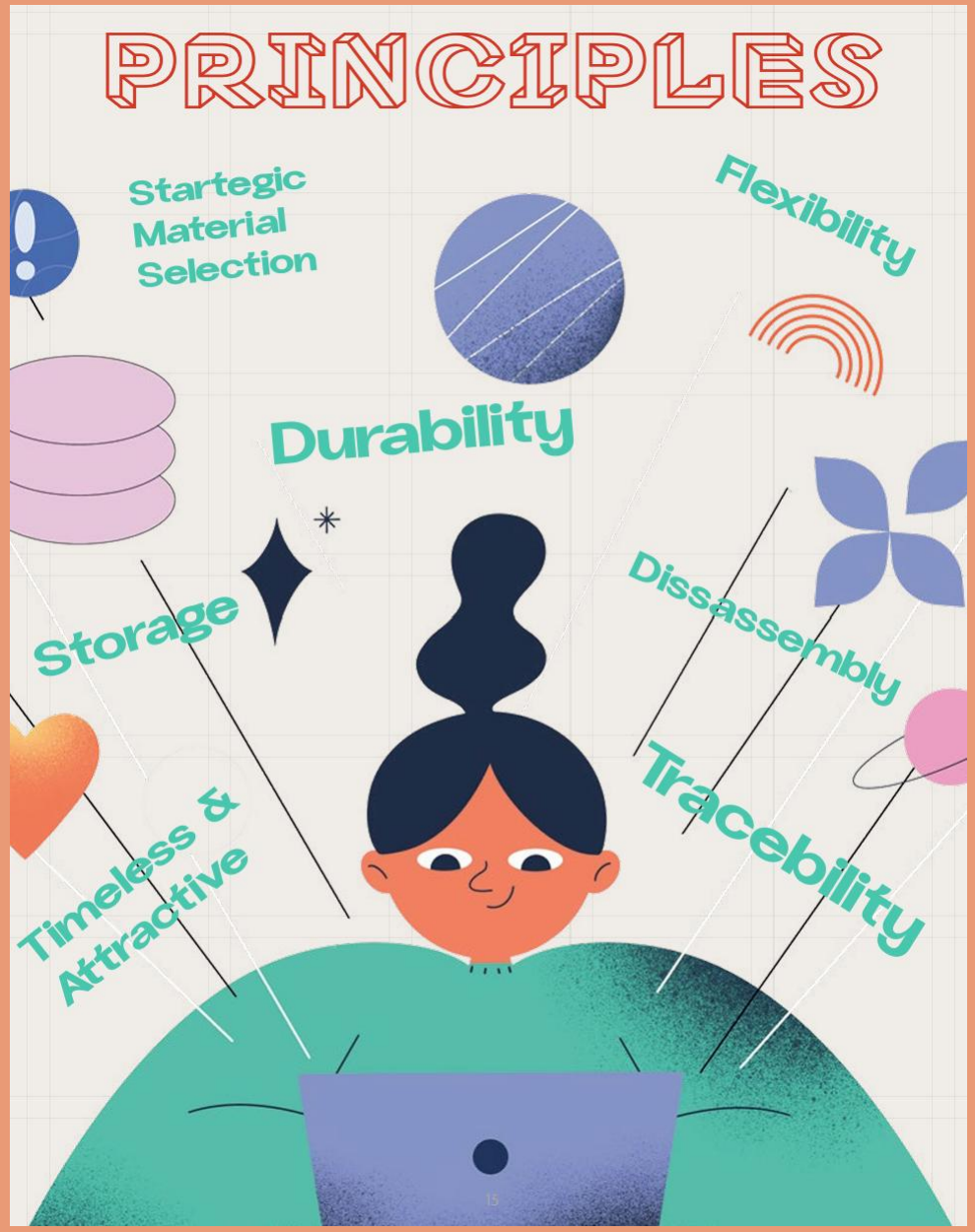
Circular design = opportunity, not limitation

Already in practice today:

- renewable materials (e.g. hemp, flax)
- modular systems
- design for disassembly & repair

Every design decision shapes tomorrow's environmental impact

→ **Get design right, and everything that follows becomes easier, lighter, better**



Workplace

A living system

Workplaces are rapidly evolving: hybrid, flexible, constantly changing

Challenge + opportunity: future-proof, sustainable, inspiring spaces

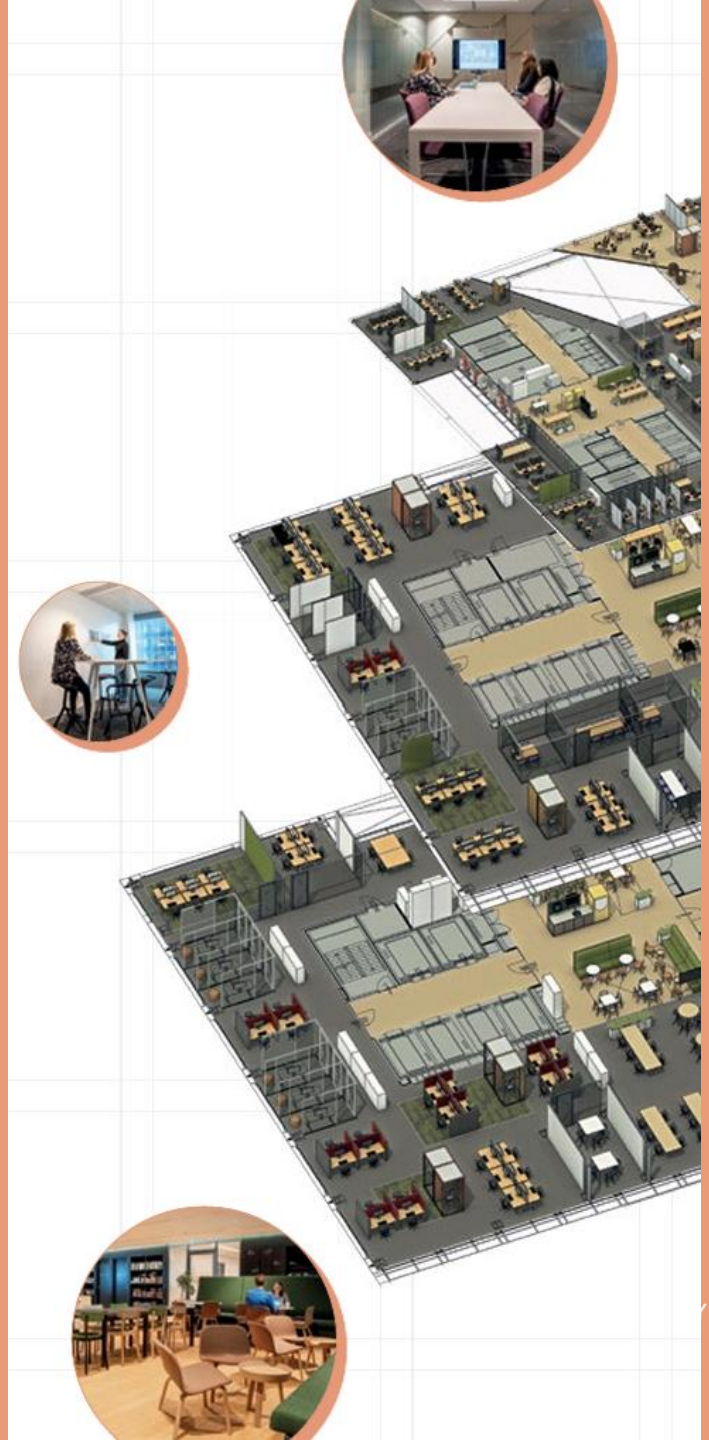
Offices as systems: people, furniture, materials, flows interact

Circularity fits naturally:

- reuse & adaptability reduce waste
- modular setups enable change
- durable, repairable furniture for shared use

Refresh spaces without starting from scratch

→ Circular workplaces are more flexible, engaging, and human



Climate

Making the invisible visible

Furniture emissions are hidden: materials, supply chains, production

Every new product = resource extraction + carbon footprint

Circular strategies change the game:

- extend product life
- reduce virgin material use
- keep carbon stored in products

Slow material flows, avoid emissions

R-strategies = simple framework to understand impact & choices

→ Circularity is one of the fastest, most practical climate strategies



CIRCULAR ECONOMY OFFICE

Economy

A new way of doing business

Circularity = not just environmental, but economic opportunity

Shift from one-off sales → long-term value & relationships

New business models:

- extend product life
- services instead of ownership
- multiple life cycles for products

Opens new markets, diversifies revenue, builds resilience

→ Circular business means doing things differently — and shaping the future of the sector



CIRCULAR ECONOMY OFFICE

Enablers

Creating the conditions

Circularity needs the right ecosystem to scale

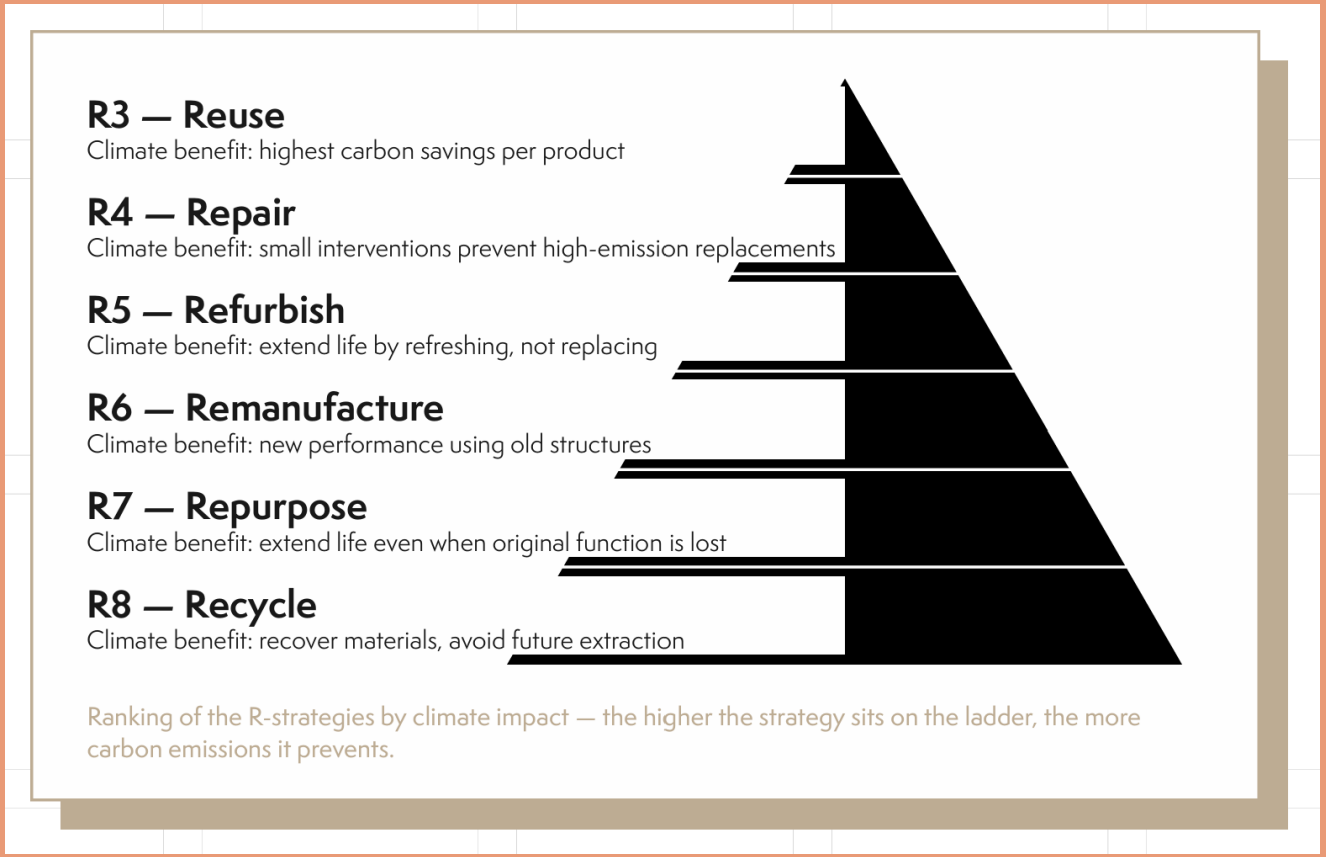
Key enablers:

- supportive policies & standards
- circular public procurement
- new skills & education
- cross-sector collaboration

Moves circularity from pilot → mainstream

Cities, companies & knowledge partners drive momentum

→ When the conditions are right, circularity becomes the new normal



CIRCULAR ECONOMY OFFICE

Pilots

The heart of the transformation

- 7 CEO pilot projects = real-life laboratories for circularity
- Not case studies, but hands-on testing & implementation
- Each tackles a concrete challenge → builds a blueprint for the sector
- Cover the full value chain:
  - product design
  - reuse & refurbishment
  - new materials (incl. textiles)
  - real workplace demonstrations
- Strong locally, impactful across Europe

→ **From local pilots to scalable solutions for a circular furniture system**



Takeaways & Tools

From insight to action

Circular transition = a journey for every organisation

Not *if*, but *how to start and scale*

Practical guidance for:

- furniture sector
- cities & regions
- beginners → advanced

Key tools:

Circular Maturity Indicator (CMI) to assess & plan next steps

CEO Guidelines for design, materials, business & procurement

→ Not a checklist, but a roadmap — start, act, improve, scale



Circular Maturity Indicator (CMI)

Let's try it



CIRCULAR ECONOMY OFFICE

Manifesto

Coffeatable Book



FREE DOWNLOAD
ON OUR
OFFICIAL WEBSITE

Interreg
North Sea

Co-funded by
the European Union

CEO

CIRCULAR
ECONOMY
OFFICE